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Joseph W. Danielson. *War's Desolating Scourge: The Union's Occupation of North Alabama.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012. xiii + 218 pp. $34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-1844-6.

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The Roots of Confederate Defeat: The Home Front, Military Occupation, and the Hard War and Loss of Morale Theses

This book recounts a familiar story to Civil War enthusiasts and academics that played out in the hill country of northern Alabama, one that was repeated across the Deep South. Cooperationists and secessionists engaged in a standoff over the fate of their state, secession was triumphant, the Confederacy was formed, the area was invaded, conciliation turned to hard war in the face of southern resistance, self-emancipation was promoted, Southern morale supported by evangelical faith waned with constant hardships, and the war was lost but Reconstruction was won. Joseph W. Danielson applies and tests components of this narrative from the "Hard War" and the "Loss of Morale" theses at the local level in his book, *War's Desolating Scourge*.

Danielson's book expands on Margaret Storey's work, *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (2004), by focusing not just on Unionists, but also on white and black Southerners in the sixteen counties of northern Alabama. Danielson's methodology consists of synthesizing the best of political, military, and social history as it relates to northern Alabama and military occupation. This approach enables the author to accomplish his goal of applying the historiography on war and society and test it in a locality. What emerges is an excellent manuscript that successfully applies macro-historical arguments to the micro level, illustrating the hardships that war brought to the home front, and thereby adding to the body of knowledge on northern Alabama's Civil War experience.

The introduction lays out the familiar concept that Northerners and the Lincoln administration did not fully grasp the extent of Southern support for states' rights, white supremacy, and eventually the Southern cause, which would prove problematic for the Union war effort. Danielson explains the reason for the Northern belief that Unionists were the majority population of the South in the first chapter, which lays out the background of northern Alabama. He covers the region's economic output, trade ties to Upper South slave states and the North, and strong cooperationist sentiment at Alabama's secession convention. Despite all these factors, the author shows that once Abraham Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers, northern Alabamians overwhelmingly supported the Confederacy and pledged to resist any attempt at reunification. This resolve would be thoroughly tested in the trials that lay ahead.

Subsequent chapters are organized chronologically and contain several subtopics. These include: support for white supremacy, Herrenvolk democracy, strategic considerations and the withdrawal of Confederate forces, military occupation, conciliation, women, passive resistance, guerrilla warfare, hard war, religion and morale, self-emancipation, refugees, the collapse of morale, and the early successes and ultimate failure of Reconstruction policies. Danielson neatly weaves these topics into his chronological narrative, which enables the reader to see how contingency drove these factors and events.

The efficiency of Danielson's prose stems from his ability to draw on and synthesize voluminous primary source materials into a coherent narrative. Dozens of manuscript collections, newspapers, published memoirs, government documents, and electronic census data and digital collections provide a detailed ground level view of the war's effect on society. Furthermore, Danielson's mastery and use of cutting-edge academic studies make his work fresh, broad yet focused, and scholarly. Though many local studies suffer a lack of engagement with larger macro-historical arguments, Danielson's book flawlessly weaves in the work of academics like Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South* (1995); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward South-*

ern Civilians (1995); and Sarah Anne Rubin, *Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy* (2005). Reference to such books enables the audience to compare what was going on in northern Alabama to the wider war and to see the role contingency played in the shaping of Southerners' experiences with military occupation. The book's narrow focus and the breadth of Danielson's source material greatly contribute to the historiography of Alabama's Civil War experience.

This book's intended audience is clearly scholarly, as the topic, scope, sources, citations, and conclusions are all highly academic. Professors and graduate students in particular will find this work of great interest and useful for any study of military occupation during the Civil War. That is not to say that this book is not approachable for undergraduates or the wider public. The book's fluid prose, simplistic language, and concise narrative make it an understandable study, as well as a brisk and enjoyable read.

This is a very strong book and it is difficult to find any flaws, as the source material is impeccable and the conclusions are well traveled, yet still insightful. However, this well-traveled road does at times become tedious for readers well versed in military occupation studies. One must strain to see much difference between other academics' and Danielson's methodology and conclusions. The author does not forge any new path into the investigation of the war's effect on society, but rather successfully applies the same working methodology pioneered by Ash, Grimsley, and Storey to the neglected area of northern Alabama. Unfortunately, the timing of this book's publication prevented it from benefiting from newer occupation studies, like Judkin Browning's *Shifting Loyalties: The Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* (2012), which explores in more detail the role of African Americans and Northern benevolent societies during military occupation.

Regardless, the author is overwhelming successful in his goal of illustrating the devastating toll that war and military occupation left on northern Alabama. Danielson masterfully recounts the contingencies and factors that led to the invasion of the region by the US Army, as well as the interplay between varying Southern constituencies. For these reasons, this work will serve as an integral source on the Union occupation of northern Alabama for some time.

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